

VICTIMS OF CRIME - PRACTICE AND ATTITUDES OF PROBATION STAFF

Sarah Atterbury, Mid Hertfordshire Probation Area

Abstract

This article examines the centrality of victim issues within probation practice in an era of well-publicised, political rhetoric which claims that consideration for victims of crime is now central to the policies and practices of the Criminal Justice System. From the perspective of the Probation Service some, such as Williams, claims that this has represented a cultural shift, facilitating a 'more rounded picture' (1999 p113). However, others argue that raising the victims profile has been an ongoing effort within the Probation Service for the last twenty years (Crawford and Enterkin, 1999). The research on which this article is based follows a curiosity about how real and radical this shift is at practice level and to identify the extent of any gaps between rhetoric, policy and practice. Though conducted in only one Probation Area (not that in which the author currently works), as part of the degree element of the Diploma in Probation Studies (DipPS), it provides food for thought and hopefully a basis for further investigation.

Key Words: Victims, Training, Offender Management, Research, Probation Practice

Introduction

Traditionally, perpetrators of crime have been the 'focus of early theories of crime and of criminal justice policy' (Croall, 1998 p81), with others going further to suggest that victims have been ignored by the courts whilst protecting the interests of the defendants (McDonald, 1976). More recently, political attention to victims of crime - as consumers of the criminal justice system - has increased, encapsulated by the current Government strategy to put 'the victim of crime and the law-abiding citizen first' (Home Office, 2004 p7). In political speeches, Tony Blair has reiterated the familiar rhetoric of the need to rebalance the criminal justice system 'in favour of the decent law-abiding majority' (The Telegraph, 2006).

From the specific view-point of Probation practice, there are inherent tensions in serving the interests and protecting the rights of different stakeholders. Furthermore, such simplistic political statements promulgate a perspective which serves to sustain an

'artificial separation' of victims from offenders. Victims and offenders are not a mutually exclusive group and by treating them as such negates the needs of a vast number of victims.

The first government funded victim survey - the British Crime Survey (an annual survey last conducted in 2005/2006) - offered an opportunity to gather 'victim-orientated data' which could be used to inform policy and practice in the CJS with regard to victims. The survey asks adults (by interview) in private households about their experience of victimisation in the previous 12 months, the results of which are published in a government report along with offences reported to the police. According to the Home Office, 'the results play an important role in informing Home Office policy' which 'helps in the planning of crime prevention programmes' (Home Office, 2007).

However, many methodological limitations have been noted, including the sampling framework of the survey which neglects certain victims such as transient, homeless, young and minority ethnic categories (Williams, 1999). The survey also overlooks victims who are in institutions - often more vulnerable and susceptible to victimisation, including offenders - as well as organisations which may have suffered victimisation. Croall points to failures of such surveys to acknowledge or address the 'structural basis of victims' vulnerability which may be related to wider inequalities' (1998 p97). Cumulative crimes, such as domestic or racial abuse, are noted to have been virtually excluded by virtue of the data collection methods (Coleman and Moynihan, 1996), since interviews within the home setting make such disclosures problematic. However, in terms of domestic abuse, this problem has been recognised and attempts made to address this by the inclusion of a self-completion module covering experiences of domestic abuse. Results from the 2001 module revealed a 'prevalence of domestic violence five times higher than that in the main face-to-face part of the British Crime Survey' (Walby, 2004 p2).

This additional element to the core survey is an important one, not least so that the need for strategies to address such offences and to meet the needs of these victims is fully acknowledged and developed. Previous ignorance and inaccuracy regarding the nature and prevalence of offences has been noted to result in inappropriate advice and strategies for crime prevention. For example, most advice on crime prevention has tended to be targeted at women whilst outside the home, thereby failing to acknowledge 'the greatest risk to women: known men' (Stanko, 1994 p37). Despite feminism highlighting this area of victimisation, Stanko notes the dominant underlying principle of crime responses to be based on street crime, occurring in public and committed by strangers. The advice given to date to women on this premise would seem, to some extent, further irrelevant given the empirical evidence showing that this group of potential victims already takes greater precautions for their safety than men (Stanko, 1994 p37). Stanko also notes the paradox in terms of less advice being available for male victims, despite statistics revealing that victimisation is more often a problem for men. One would hope that further collection of data by the government which support existing evidence will result in increased commitment to adapting advice and strategies accordingly.

Notwithstanding some important caveats noted above, which may restrict the parameters within which any practitioner can work, the profile of victims is undoubtedly rising within the criminal justice system. This is evidenced by new and amended legislation, increased budgetary allocations for victim services, policy and professional standards and the growth of victim support agencies. Compensation for victims was one of the first demonstrations of victim consideration, though subsequent campaigns and initiatives reflect the complexity of victims' needs which had previously been ignored.

In terms of other specific offence types and associated victim needs, such as racially motivated offences or hate crimes - offences against a person or property, motivated by prejudice or hate - greater recognition and understanding has led to legislation to target offenders and support to better reflect the needs of victims. Legislative evidence comes in the form of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which created a range of new racially and religiously aggravated offences; the Criminal Justice Act 2003 which introduced tougher sentences for offences motivated by hatred of the victim's sexual orientation (this must now be taken into account by the sentencing court as an aggravating factor, in addition to race or religious hate motivation); the Race and Religious Hatred Act 2006 which makes it a criminal offence to use threatening words or behaviour with the intention of stirring up hatred against any group of people defined by their religious beliefs or lack of religious beliefs. In terms of victims of such offences, it has long been recognised that fear of retribution, embarrassment and lack of confidence in being taken seriously has led to a lack of reporting such crime. In an attempt to address this Third Party Reporting Centres have been set up whereby victims of hate crimes can report the incident via another agency, such as Victim Support. Such agencies are also more likely to be able to identify appropriate support organisations to best help the victim.

Literature Review

This literature review aims to look at the legislation, policies and advocated practice in the Probation Service with regard to victim issues. Reference is made to this later, to discuss and illuminate the findings.

The first Victim's Charter in 1990 and Victim Support's publication 'The Rights of Victims of Crime' (1995) represented 'an important watershed' in incorporating a victim perspective within criminal justice, encouraging a commitment by Criminal Justice agencies to give greater consideration to such stakeholders (Crawford and Enterkin, 1999). This made explicit what the victim could expect from the Criminal Justice System (CJS), though it has been criticised for leaving 'too much to the discretion of professional groups within the criminal justice system' (Koffman, 1996 in Said, 2003 p2) and lacking statutory obligation (Said, 2003). However there is recent progress, with legislation introduced to keep victims informed about their cases and about support services (Home Office, 2006).

In terms of Probation practice specifically, the Criminal Justice and Courts' Services Act 2000 placed a statutory responsibility on the probation service to offer contact and support

to the victims of crime, survivors and next of kin of serious sexual and violent criminal offences where the perpetrator is sentenced to 12 months or more imprisonment. The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 extended this duty to contact with victims of mentally disordered offenders, sentenced under the Mental Health Act, who receive a Hospital Order with restrictions for a serious violent or sexual offence.

Furthermore, the legislation introduced an obligation for a multi-agency approach to managing offenders assessed as posing the highest risk of harm, including the involvement of Victim Liaison Officers at the meetings to present victim information and concerns. This statutory multi-agency approach, aimed at minimising the risk posed by offenders, meeting the needs of victims and reducing the likelihood of creating further victims, is known as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

In addition to such statutory obligation, National Standards are set in relation to the work undertaken by the Probation Service with victims. Victim Liaison Officers have a responsibility to contact victims of those offenders meeting the criteria outlined above, within 8 weeks of an offender being sentenced. When consideration is being given to the offender's release from prison, victim contact must be made to seek feedback on any concerns the victim may have and these views are submitted to the Parole Board and Mental Health Unit of the Home Office by probation staff. This can then inform additional licence conditions imposed on the offender, such as exclusion from a certain area and forbidding contact with the victim when the offender is released.

Though initially criticised for lack of guidance, fore-thought or additional funding (Williams, 1999), victim liaison work within probation has progressed into a field of work undertaken separately to the work of offender managers. In his foreword to the Thematic Inspection, Sir Graham Smith commented that 'delivering this service has involved a fundamental shift towards the perspective of the victim' (HMIP, 2000). However, Tudor notes that work with offenders, where probation officers in this role have no contact with the victim, can sometimes feel like 'only half the job' which, in some areas, has led 'to a lack of concentration on victim-offender work' (2002 p138). Without a full understanding of case-specific victim issues, she suggests that work with offenders cannot present the opportunity to make amends for their behaviour.

In terms of the work undertaken with offenders, National Standards - though heavily focussing on contact, compliance and enforcement procedures - outline standards in relation to one-to-one supervision, as well as victim contact work, where 'work on the offender's attitude to victims', where there is a direct victim, should be included in the sentence plan (Home Office, 2005). They further state that one purpose of supervision in the community is to 'challenge the offender to accept responsibility for the crimes committed and their consequences' (Home Office, 2000).

The Offender Management Inspection (HMIP, 2006a) further outlines the assessment criteria for work with offenders, which is linked to National Standards. HM Inspectorate of Probation is an independent Inspectorate, funded by the Ministry of Justice, and

reporting directly to the Secretary of State on the effectiveness of work with individual offenders, children and young people aimed at reducing re-offending and protecting the public. This states that 'victim awareness work appropriate to the case is delivered to offenders wherever relevant, and especially where there is a direct victim' (pg 8).

In order to evaluate, identify and promote effective work with offenders undertaken by the probation service, since 2003 each probation area is inspected against specified criteria by HMIP over a three year cycle. The 2005 Effective Supervision Inspection (ESI) undertaken in the area in which this research was conducted, identifies that victim awareness work is an area for improvement, stating that 'victim awareness issues were not properly addressed in about half of the cases seen' (HMIP, 2006b p25). Although those working directly with offenders do not liaise with victims - rightly so, I would suggest, due to the inherent tensions which would exist if contact were made by one officer with both victim and offender - being fully aware of the context and impact of the offence is crucial to inform relevant and meaningful victim awareness work with the offender. The pertinence of this is further compounded by the fact that making offenders aware of the impact of the crime constitutes one of the four key aims stated by the National Probation Service.

Though there is little empirical evidence to link increased victim empathy displayed by offenders with a reduced risk of re-offending (Dominey, 2002), Tudor (2002) claims that developing such empathy is essential to probation practice. Where work is undertaken with offenders, with officers having little awareness of or giving little attention to victim issues, this presents a danger that 'workers will collude with their lack of knowledge and understanding of the direct effects of their offending behaviour' (Tudor, 2002 p132). However, the involvement of probation officers with victims, whilst also dealing primarily with offenders, can create conflicts of interest, problems in maintaining confidentiality and demands training and skill (Reeves and Mulley, 2000 p137). Such concerns are highlighted in a study by Johnstone in which he advocates 'that an officer does not contact the victim(s) of the offender for which he/she is responsible' (1996 in Goodey, 2005 p171). This is a principle currently followed, as a feature of good practice, by probation officers working with offenders in the UK.

Despite the separation of work with victims and offenders within the Probation Service, youth justice in the UK is underpinned by a restorative justice principle, offering 'a victim-centred paradigm shift away from the limitations of traditional justice' (Goodey, 2005 p183). The Referral Order currently available for young offenders provides 'encouraging signs' of the potential to place 'the victim at the centre of the sentencing process', without putting pressure on them to make actual sentencing decisions (Lupton, 1998 in Williams, 1999 p81). The Referral Order panel meeting provides a forum for 'mediation' between the offender and those affected by the crime and therefore has 'a stronger remit to consider the needs of victims, the family and 'community'' (Goodey, 2005 p213). This can be seen to have given ownership back to the victim of 'their'

victimisation, which Christie notes (1977 in Goodey, 2005 p187) is 'stolen' by lawyers in traditional justice which pushes victims to the periphery of criminal proceedings.

However, Goodey notes that justice can only truly be restorative if it is effective in addressing the needs of both the victim and the offender. This is where much of the debate lies. Though it would be impossible to detail all aspects of the argument here, the crux lies in whether or not this does represent a 'shift' in penal thinking or whether it sustains an offender-focused system. Wright (1991) highlights the possibility of offender's using mediation to reduce their sentence and whether diversion from prosecution and imprisonment actually sidelines the concerns of victims (in Goodey, 2005). The low numbers of victims who are actually participating in the Referral Order Panels is another concern which may reflect that information, rather than involvement, is preferred by some victims. Alternatively, this may point to practical deficiencies in terms of a failure of YOT staff to fulfil their duties, due to a lack of resources and time constraints (Goody, 2005 p204). In this regard, Levrant et al (1999 in Goodey, 2005 p209) note that consideration of three practical issues are indicative of whether restorative justice is a substantive or symbolic shift in criminal justice: whether sufficient resources are provided; the willingness of staff to change to a more facilitative role and the commitment of CJ staff to a new philosophy. As Reeves and Mulley (2000 p136) note, though the CJS may 'take on new ideas', the implementation 'may convert them to work towards meeting their more traditional end'. Attempts towards a more restorative type approach would, therefore, require training and commitment to ensure that victims do not become an 'instrument' which sustains an offender-focussed system. Indeed, American and some British mediation schemes have been criticised for ostensibly being concerned with, or helping victims 'whilst really only being concerned with the interests of offenders or with the rehabilitation of offenders' (Miers, 1992 in JUSTICE, 1998 p45).

It is important to note that legislation and policy are not the sole requisites for ensuring that victims are genuinely considered throughout the CJS. In parallel with the PCS model described by Thompson (1997), whereby discrimination is seen to operate at personal, cultural and structural levels, there is a need for commitment at each level in order to truly espouse an increasing awareness and consideration of victims. This more subjective area is not the focus of the research or this article and would possibly require a more qualitative design and methodology.

The second Victim's Charter in 1996 increased victims' status further, particularly regarding information. Victim Personal Statements emerged as a pilot project whereby victims could provide details of the impact of the offence, giving 'victims a voice in a way that they have not had before' (Walklate, 2002 p148). For probation practice, this is a valuable source of information since National Standards (Home Office, 2000) dictated that Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) should 'assess the consequences of the offence, including what is known of the impact on any victim'. However, the latest standards (Home Office, 2005) have amended this to inclusion of such information only where this can be drawn from 'CPS papers or from a victim personal statement'. This, then,

eradicates inclusion of ad hoc or unofficial information, though also puts greater emphasis on the need for better procedures and lines of communication between probation and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Conversely, the JUSTICE report (1998) sees the PSR as an inappropriate vehicle through which to report victim issues, particularly because of the second-handedness of the information reported.

However, even where such policy requirements can be met, there is confusion about the purpose of such information (Walklate, 2002) and concerns that 'it invites injustice (where the impact of crime is unrelated to criminal intent) and because it ignores the fact that many crimes are the concern of the state as well as the victim' (Mawby and Gill 1987 p229-30 in Walklate, 2002 p148). However, quantitative analyses and qualitative research (Erez, 2000) could find no evidence to support the assertion that such information has an impact on sentencing. This then highlights the question of whether 'victim impact statements [are] yet another ploy in the symbolic invocation of the victim' (Walklate, 2002 p148). However, research from Australia concludes that high satisfaction rates from victims who provided statements could be attributed to their need for a 'therapeutic jurisprudence' (Erez, 1999 in Walklate, 2002 p152). This highlights a benefit of such victim input, even though this may 'fall far short of victims' expectations and, more importantly, their desires' (Crawford in Crawford and Goodey, 2000 p289).

Researching Probation Staff Views and Practice

The small-scale research survey on which this article is based was carried out in one probation area in June 2006, as part of the Diploma in Probation Studies. The research question was stated as follows: 'Are Victims of Crime a Key Consideration in Probation Practice? Views and Practice of Probation Officers, Probation Service Officers and Trainee Probation Officers'.

Ethical approval for the research was given by De Montfort University's Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee and the Probation area under study. Amendments were made to the questionnaire, following a pilot survey of 8 people - including staff members, tutor and Practice Development Assessor - and a final, written questionnaire was then distributed to all staff fulfilling the criteria (i.e. Officers who supervise offenders and/or write PSRs for Courts). Each tick box was pre-coded and SPSS (statistical software) was then used for data entry and data analysis. All such staff were able to participate anonymously in the survey and all were asked to complete the questionnaire. The response rate was 50% and can be broken down as follows:

	Male	Female	TOTAL
Probation Officers	5 (4)	17 (7)	22 (11)
Probation Service Officers	6 (3)	10 (4)	16 (7)
Trainee Probation Officers	0	10 (6)	10 (6)
TOTAL	11 (7)	37 (17)	48 (24)

The central areas covered by the questionnaire were:

- Practice of inclusion of victim issues in offender sentence plans
- Practice of contact with Victim Liaison Unit
- Views on victim contact for more effective intervention with offenders
- Experience of prominence of victim issues since joining the Probation Service
- Experience of training on victim issues from the Probation Service
- Experience of requesting/receiving victim personal statements for preparation of Pre-Sentence Reports.

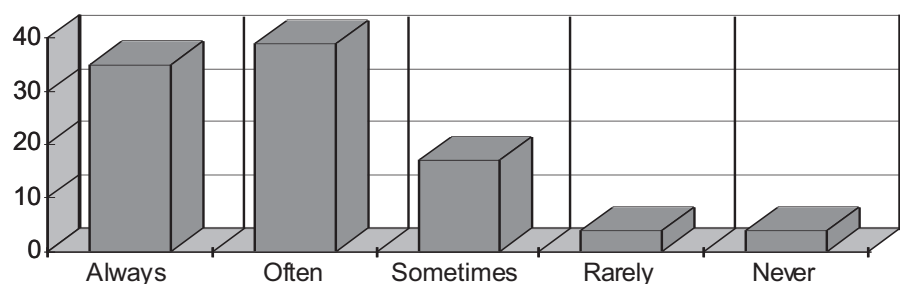
Discussion of Findings

My research question - Are Victims of Crime a Key Consideration in Probation Practice? - stemmed from a belief that the rhetoric of the victim now taking centre stage throughout the CJS is not supported by the views and practice of probation staff. However, the very subject of a victim-focus is somewhat problematic and limited in the context of generic probation practice since it is, by nature, an offender orientated role. It would also be remiss not to acknowledge that the questions asked maintain an offender-focus.

Identifying views or practice relating to victim issues or information, from the explicit perspective of working with offenders, does not necessarily constitute a consideration for the victims of crime. A further caveat concerns representativeness: the findings from this small-scale research cannot be generalised to the whole population of Officers within the Probation Service. Nevertheless, the research highlights some interesting issues which may be useful for other practitioners and managers to consider.

The first issues investigated concern the practice of sentence planning and the inclusion of victim awareness.

Table 1: Do you include victim awareness issues as part of the Sentence plan? (Tick only one box) (%):



In terms of practice following policy guidelines, the majority (74%) of Officers either always or often include victim awareness as part of the sentence plan. Seventeen percent of respondents (N=23) stated that they sometimes included this in sentence plans and 4% either rarely or never included this as an area for attention in the sentence plan.

Table 2: If not always, is this because (tick all that apply):

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (valid)
No direct victim	12	80
Unsure about victim issues	4	27
Covered elsewhere in OASys	4	27
Time restrictions	3	20
Not applicable	2	13
Prefer to focus on other risk factors	1	7
Offence not serious enough	0	0
Risk not serious enough	0	0
Not considered important	0	0

Where victim issues are not always included as part of the sentence plan, this is frequently because there is no direct victim (80%), which follows central policy guidelines. However, this is an area of note for some Probation areas, which now advocate inclusion of victim awareness in every sentence plan.

Two other common reasons given for not always including victim awareness issues in the sentence plan relate to other sections of the OASys covering this topic (27%) - which could illustrate a confusion regarding what constitutes the sentence plan (a conceptual or technical confusion) - and being unsure about victim issues (27%). In terms of the latter, Brienen et al (2000 in Dominey, 2002) note the importance of staff training for the improvement of services to victims. When discussing the quality of PSR assessments (though possibly equally relevant to supervision content), much will depend on the extent to which training has been received in the area of victimology. Interestingly, this would seem to be supported by the findings, which reveal that those who have received training in victim issues include this area on the sentence plan more frequently; for example, of those who stated that they always include this area on sentence plans, 88% had received training on victim issues:

Table 3: Frequency with which victim issues are included in the Sentence Plan cross tabulated with training received on victim issues

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Received training	7 (88%)	7 (78%)	2 (50%)	0	0
No training	1 (12%)	2 (22%)	2 (50%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)

The majority of respondents state that they have received training from the Probation Service on victim issues (71%). This seems an encouraging finding, since there is no policy which makes such training a necessary provision. However, the survey revealed a significant difference between grade of staff and training provided on this subject:

Table 4: Crosstabulation of training received on victim issues and job title

	Probation Officer	Probation Service Officer	Trainee Probation Officer
Training Received	91	43	67
No training	9	57	33

Interestingly, when asked the question of whether they believe there should be more training opportunities provided in relation to victim issues, all respondents stated 'Yes'. Again, there is no evidence to explain why this is, but it suggests that officers consider that they would be more effective in their work with more training in this area. This could correspond with the high percentage (78%) who also answered that their work could be more effective if they had contact with the victim of the offence - a practice advocated by Tudor (2002), to ensure that case-specific victim issues are not overlooked. Similarly, the majority of officers (74%) stated that they always or often felt that work with the offender would benefit from more victim information being provided.

In terms of a change in focus, the longest serving staff members (11+ years) all reported that victim issues had become more central to their work with offenders. Explanations for this were given as a result of more 'victim-offender information' (33%); policy, management and legal instructions (66%); organisational and political culture (33%) and changes in personal values/victim awareness (100%). However, it is not possible, through this survey, to know the timescale or to identify how this has affected their practice. Responses of those working between 8-11 years, along with the 2-5 year category, did not support the rhetoric of any change in perspective. The majority of the newest members of staff (67%) suggested, however, that this shift was the case for them. One possibility could be the higher levels of training and development and management input that occurs when new to the Service. Overall, only 58% indicated that victim issues are now more central to their work with offenders, the majority of whom (71%) cited a change in personal values/victim awareness as the reason for this. The latter response would therefore appear

to be a more significant factor in terms of a cause and effect relationship than legislation/government pressure and probation practice in this regard.

Table 5: If victim issues have become more central to work with offenders, why? (tick all that apply) (N = 14)

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (valid)
Change in personal values/victim awareness	10	71
Policy/legal documents/instructions from Home Office	6	43
Formal instructions/guidance from management	5	36
Informal instructions/guidance from management	4	29
Political climate	4	29
Organisational culture	3	21
Not applicable	1	7

Where there had been contact with the victim of the offence (22%), this was not deliberately arranged by the Officer in most cases (60%). This is unsurprising, since this practice is not ordinarily advocated (Johnstone, 1996 in Goodey, 2005). However, it is interesting that so many respondents indicated that contact with the victim would enable them to be more effective in their work with offenders. Further qualitative research would reveal whether the caveats of such practice had been fully considered or whether, as noted by Miers (1988 in JUSTICE, 1998) this was purely a response from the perspective of offender rehabilitation. A question regarding whether they felt this would be beneficial for the victim may possibly yield a different response.

Where an offender/offence met the criteria of Victim Liaison involvement, contact with the VLU was made by the Officer in most cases (75%). It would be interesting to investigate why this is not done in every case and perhaps highlights an area in which improvement could go some way to address the deficiency highlighted by the ESI inspection for this area: i.e. that 'victim awareness issues were not properly addressed in about half of the cases seen' (HMIP, 2006).

Giving victims 'a voice', despite the ambiguous legal purpose, is incorporated into policy in terms of PSRs and Victim Statements. It is perhaps noteworthy then that the findings show that 40% of PSR authors either rarely or never receive this documentation. Of those who have requested a statement - indicating that there is a direct victim - the majority were rarely able to get a copy of it. This would perhaps support claims of a purely 'symbolic invocation of the victim' (Walklate in Williams, 2002 p148). However, further investigation would be needed to establish the ratio between the number of statements given and the number received by PSR authors.

Conclusion

Though most respondents appear to place importance on victim issues in terms of information about or from victims, as well as reporting a desire for more training opportunities on the subject, this is not a valid measurement of whether this is victim-focussed, since it does nothing to support or refute the claims that this continues to be in the interests of offender rehabilitation (Miers, 1992 in JUSTICE, 1998 p45). This could be an area for further research. However, even if this is the underlying objective, the rehabilitation of offenders is an important part of public protection and should not be derided.

Nevertheless, the research does highlight some interesting points on the subject of victim issues. In terms of my initial curiosity, it would seem that the gap between policy and practice is fairly minimal; victim awareness is addressed in the majority of cases (at least on paper) and contact is made with the VLU in the majority of appropriate cases, which may imply that victim-specific issues are often being addressed - as advocated by Tudor (in Williams, 2002). There is, though, some deficiency here which perhaps corroborates the findings from the ESI inspection (HMIP, 2006). However, the gap is greater where inter-agency work is required in terms of Victim Statements.

However, the gap between rhetoric and practice, in terms of a 'fundamental shift towards the perspective of the victim' (HMIP, 2000) would seem over-stated in the context of offender management/supervision. The large number of responses reporting a change in personal values and victim awareness - reported to have impacted on practice - is encouraging in terms of the personal level at which discrimination is seen to operate (Thomson, 1997). In fact, it would seem to corroborate Thomson's argument that commitment at this level is equally (if not more) important to practice. Furthermore, this highlights the importance of training opportunities, to increase awareness and knowledge of victim issues to avoid colluding with offenders 'lack of knowledge and understanding' (Tudor 2002). The research highlights that staff of PSO status have received the least amount of training, which may require re-assessment of provision or opportunity for this level of staff.

I have highlighted areas in which further investigation or possible improvement could be made in terms of practice relating to victim issues. However, the task of identifying the importance of the victim in relation to probation practice has also underlined the problems inherent in a government approach to reform, specifically victim-centred rhetoric, which neglects the complexity of the Criminal Justice System. The Government's strategy takes no account of the different agency objectives and cultures and neglects the conflicts and tensions that arise by putting victims at the heart of criminal justice.

References

- Brienen, M. et al (2000) 'Evaluation and meta-evaluation of the effectiveness of victim-oriented legal reform in Europe', *Criminologie* 33 (1): 122-144
- Coleman, C. and Moynihan, J. (1996) *Understanding Crime Data. Crime and Criminal Justice Series*. Open University Press.
- Crawford, A. and Goodey, J. (2000) (eds.) *Integrating a Victim Perspective within Criminal Justice*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- Crawford, A. and Enterkin, J. (1999) 'Victim Contact Work and the Probation Service: A Study of Service Delivery and Impact', *Centre for Criminal Justice Studies*, University of Leeds, CCJS Press
- Croall, H. (1998) *Crime and Society in Britain*. Longman: Essex
- Dominey, J. (2002) 'Addressing Victim Issues in Pre-sentence Reports' in B. Williams, (ed.) *Reparation and Victim-Focused Social Work*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd.
- Erez, E. and Rogers, L. (1999) 'Victim Impact Statements and Sentencing Outcomes and Processes: The Perspectives of Legal Professionals', *British Journal of Criminology*, 39 (2) pp 216-39
- Erez, E. (2000) 'Integrating a Victim Perspective in Criminal Justice Through Victim Impact Statements' in A. Crawford, and J. Goodey, (eds.) *Integrating a Victim Perspective within Criminal Justice*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- Goodey, J. (2005) *Victims and Victimology: Research, Policy and Practice*. Harlow: Longman
- Home Office (2007) 'What is the British Crime Survey'. Research Development Statistics. Available from: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html> [Accessed on 29 March, 2007].
- Home Office (2007) Crime and Victims: Hate Crime. Available from: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/hate-crime/> [Accessed on 15 September, 2007]
- Home Office (2006) 'New Rights for Victims of Crime Come into Force'. Press Release, March 31 [online]. Available from: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/victims-guide-press-release?view=Binary> [Accessed on 12 July, 2006]
- Home Office (2005) National Standards 2005: working together to reduce offending. April. National Probation Directorate.
- Home Office (2004) Cutting Crime, Delivering Justice: A Strategic Plan for Criminal Justice 2004-2008. Available online: http://www.cjsonline.gov.uk/downloads/application/pdf/cjs_strategic_plan.pdf [Accessed: 20 April 2006]
- Home Office (2000) *National Standards for the Supervision of Offenders in the Community*. National Probation Directorate.
- HMI Probation (2000) *Thematic Inspection Report. The Victim Perspective: Ensuring the Victim Matters*. London: Home Office
- HMI Probation (2006a) 'Offender Management Inspection (OMI) Criteria', March.
- HMI Probation (2006b) *Effective Supervision Inspection of the National Probation Service for England and Wales*. Available from: <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk> [Accessed 11 July, 2006]
- Johnstone, P. (1996) 'Probation Contact with Victims: Challenging Throughcare Practice', *Probation Journal*, 43(1) pp 26-28
- JUSTICE (1998) *Victims in Criminal Justice: Report of the JUSTICE Committee on the Role of the Victim in Criminal Justice*. London (ISBN 0 907247 30 X)
- Koffman, (1996) *Crime Surveys and Victims of Crime*. University of Wales Press.
- Mawby, R. and Gill, M. (1987) *Crime Victims: Needs, Services and the Voluntary Sector*. London: Tavistock.
- McDonald, W. F. (ed.) (1976) *Criminal Justice and the Victim*. California: London: Sage Publications.
- Miers, D. (1992) 'The Responsibilities and the Rights of Victims of Crime', *Modern Law Review*, 55 pp482-505
- Reeves, H. and Mulley, K. (2000) 'The New Status of Victims in the UK: Opportunities and Threats' in A. Crawford and J. Goodey (eds.) *Integrating a Victim Perspective within Criminal Justice*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

- Said, T. (2003) *The Rights of Crime Victims: A Manifesto for Better Treatment of Victims in the Criminal Justice System. A Report for The Civil Liberties Trust*, London
- Stanko, E. (1994) 'Challenging the problem of men's individual violence' in T. Newburn and E. Stanko (eds.) *Men, Masculinities and Crime: Just Boys Doing Business*, London, Routledge
- The Telegraph (2006) 'Blair Calls for Criminal Justice Reform', 23 June [online]. Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/06/23/ublair.xml> [Accessed 23 June 2006]
- Thompson, N. (1997) *Anti Discriminatory Practice* (2nd edn.). Basingstoke: Palgrave
- Tudor, B. (2002) 'Probation Work with Victims of Crime' in B. Williams (ed.) *Reparation and Victim-Focused Social Work*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd.
- Victim Support (1995) *The Rights of Victims of Crime: A Policy Paper*. London: Victim Support
- Walby, S. (2004) 'The Cost of Domestic Violence', Women and Equality Unit, DTI Publications. Available from: <http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/> [Accessed 29 March, 2007]
- Walklate, S. (2002) 'Victim Impact Statements: Voices to be heard in the Criminal Justice process?' in B. Williams (ed.) *Reparation and Victim-Focused Social Work*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd.
- Williams, B. (1999) *Working with Victims of Crime: Policies, Politics and Practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley